VIDEO & AUDIO

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Irreverent newsletters boost sales 10% after each mailing for video software chain

By Irene Clepper, contributing editor

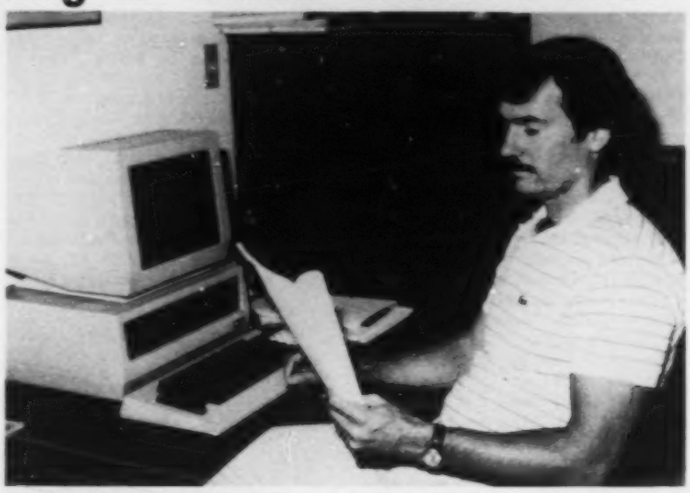
SAN FRANCISCO—"The video store that prevails against the competition from mass merchandisers will be the one giving personalized service," says Jim George, founder and president of the 12-store Home Video affiliation.

So George personalizes—and he does it with a vengeance.

Take his stores' newsletters. Always funny, often irreverent, they're read avidly by customers who call in consternation if they think their copy is late.

Home Video is also a family business, with as many relatives on deck as George can muster.

And he himself is a media hound, often appearing on radio talk shows to discuss and promote the video revolution (as well as his stores). George has publicly debated a local congressman over the first sale doctrine. And Home Video is always anxious to make movie clips available to local TV stations that may need one to flesh out a news story.



FOUR RENTAL PLANS are described in Home Video's monthly newsletter, says president Jim George. Three allow specific rental privileges for specific prices, while the last allows unlimited renting if the customer turns in his home and car.

Newsletter is read

George's newsletter, which he writes himself, is a free-wheeling roundup of new titles, what's going on in the store and what the suppliers are up to.

In one, for example, he announced his rental program as follows:

1. A yearly fee of $25, with 13 free rentals each time you renew. That would be two free at the time of renewal and one a month for the next 11 months.

2. A one-time fee of $60, with no expiration date. You may rent for the rest of your life or until we go Chapter 11. You get 13 free rentals, plus a certificate for a $30 servicing on your machine.

3. Express account, whereby you pay in advance for your rentals in increments of $50, entitling you to 50 one-day rentals.

4. Lease option. Give us the mortgage to your house and the keys to your car and you can rent anything you want at any time.

Coming down hard on suppliers, George once branded one studio's rental program as "garbage," and told his readers "no store in Northern California is planning on ordering any of the titles."

Although each newsletter's mailing is followed by an immediate increase in business of 10 percent or more, George is hard-pressed to find the time to write them. They came out irregularly until recently, when customers started calling to find out when the next edition would be available. Some were worried their names had been dropped from the mailing list.

Not to worry, said George, who started his next monthly edition with

(Continued on page 32)

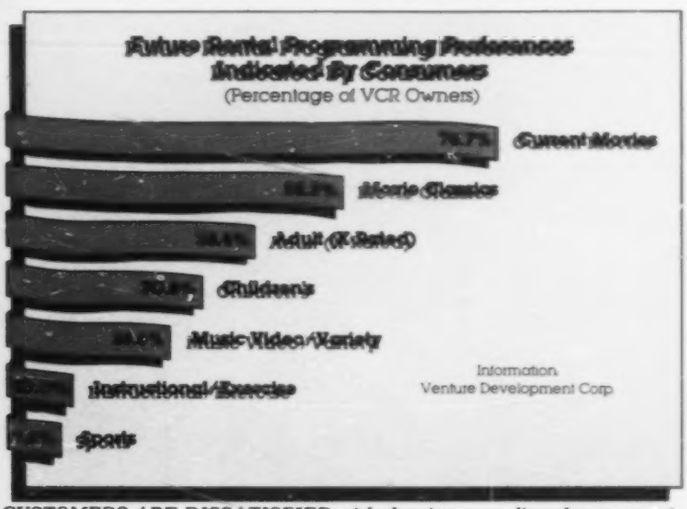
Annual VCR shipments should hit 10 million by 1987

By Marilyn Sibirski, field editor

LAS VEGAS—With VCR's becoming entrenched as a household staple, how well will other video-related products—playback-only models, cameras and tapes—fare throughout the decade?

This question was tackled during a recent presentation entitled VCR's and Videotape: What's Selling, What Will Sell Tomorrow and Why? by Ray Boggs, manager of the consumer electronics division for Venture Development Corp., a market research firm based in Wellesley, MA.

In the booming VCR category, Boggs reported that annual shipments are expected to top the 10 million mark by 1987, with most of the growth continuing in the $300 to $600 price range.



CUSTOMERS ARE DISSATISFIED with the picture quality of some rental tapes, but not with the videocassettes they purchase, according to a Venture Development Corp. study. This chart indicates the future rental programming preferences indicated by consumers.

Increased affordability and improved product performance were cited as the main contributors to the jump in sales.

"About 18 percent of the nonowners we surveyed expect to acquire a VCR in the next 12 months and another 20 percent said they are likely to purchase a unit within the next two years," Boggs told the audience. "The most popular outlet for buying a VCR, cited by more than 25 percent of nonowners, is the mass merchant discount store, although another 20 percent replied that they prefer to buy at a video specialty store."

Playback models coming

Boggs pointed out that the soon-to-be-shipped playback-only models will make their strongest appeal as a second VCR. "We expect to see an increasing number of households with two VCR's, and playback-only units will definitely contribute to this trend. But the real driving force behind the two-VCR household is more likely to be the upgrading of basic units to machines with added features."

In the video camera arena, Boggs noted that annual shipments for color models will continue to grow at modest levels. Shipments, which should rise to 700,000 in 1985, are not expected to reach the one million mark before 1989.

"About one third of VCR owners indicated that they plan to buy a video camera in the next two years," Boggs

(Continued on page 54)

Merchandising's TOP 50 FIFTY

Top 30 in videocassette rentals

TITLE	Last month's position	Months on chart
1. Star Trek III: The Search for Spock (Paramount)	—	1
2. All of Me (Thorn EMI) GP	5	2
3. Police Academy (Warner) GP	1	3
4. Tightrope (Warner) GP	2	2
5. The Woman in Red (Vestron) GP	14	2
6. Red Dawn (MGM/UA)	—	1
7. The Natural (RCA/Columbia) GP	3	4
8. Gone With the Wind (MGM/UA)	—	1
9. Once Upon A Time in America (Warner)	—	1
10. The Evil that Men Do (RCA/Columbia)	19	2
11. Revenge of the Nerds (CBS/Fox)	—	1
12. Romancing the Stone (CBS/Fox)	7	7
13. Bachelor Party (CBS/Fox)	—	1
14. Splash (Touchstone) GP	10	7
15. Purple Rain (Warner) GP	4	4
16. Cloak & Dagger (MCA) GP	11	3
17. The Adventure of Buckaroo Bunzai (Vestron)	—	1
18. Rhinestone (CBS/Fox)	20	2
19. The Empire Strikes Back (CBS/Fox)	6	4
20. The Last Starfighter (MCA) GPI	8	4
21. Dreamscape (Thorn EMI) GP	9	3
22. Best Defense (Paramount)	13	2
23. Moscow On the Hudson (RCA/Columbia)	15	5
24. The Neverending Story (Warner) GP	12	3
25. The Muppets Take Manhattan (CBS/Fox)	—	1
26. C.H.U.D. (Media)	—	1
27. Flashpoint (MCA)	—	1
28. The Philadelphia Experiment (Thorn EMI) GP	18	5
29. Mike's Murder (Warner) G	23	2
30. Against All Odds (RCA/Columbia)	17	6

Top 10 in videocassette sales

1. Star Trek III: The Search for Spock (Paramount)	—	1
2. Gone With the Wind (MGM/UA)	—	1
3. Jane Fonda's Workout (Karl Video) GPI	2	33
4. Purple Rain (Warner) GP	1	4
5. Jane Fonda Prime Time (Karl Video) GP	4	4
6. Raiders of the Lost Ark (Paramount) GPI	5	17
7. Lionel Richie: All Night Long (RCA/Columbia)	—	1
8. Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (Paramount) GPI	6	13
9. The Empire Strikes Back (CBS/Fox)	3	4
10. Star Trek: The Motion Picture (Paramount)	—	1

Top 5 in CED videodisc sales

1. The Empire Strikes Back (CBS/Fox)	1	4
2. Purple Rain (Warner) GP	2	3
3. Tightrope (Warner) GP	3	2
4. Police Academy (Warner) GP	4	3
5. Once Upon A Time in America (Warner)	—	1

Top 5 in laserdisc sales

1. Jane Fonda's Workout (Karl Video) GPI	1	6
2. Jane Fonda Prime Time (Karl Video) GP	2	4
3. Raquel: Total Beauty And Fitness (Thorn EMI) G	4	4
4. Duran Duran: Sing Blue Silver (Thorn EMI)	—	1
5. Lionel Richie: All Night Long (RCA/Columbia)	—	1

I —Golden Videocassettes award—has audited return of sales or rentals of $1 million unless company has a return policy. Then, the allowance must be deducted from the gross revenue. (ITA)
P—Title has gone platinum—has sold 100,000 on disc and/or cassette and has sales of at least $4 million. (RIAA/Video)
G—Title has gone gold—has sold 50,000 on disc and/or cassette and has sales of at least $2 million. (RIAA/Video)
(For non-theatrical products, the RIAA certifies a Gold award for 20,000 units or a value of $400,000 in suggested retail price. Platinum awards are given to tapes with 40,000 units or at least $1.6 million in suggested retail value.)

VIDEO/NEW RELEASES

CBS/FOX

BILL COSBY—HIMSELF (1981) Just that. The brilliant comedian and storyteller wrote, produced and directed this film which consists merely of Cosby stepping out onstage sitting in a chair and talking. Topics include natural childbirth, dentists, parents becoming grandparents ("That's not the woman I grew up with; that's an old person who's trying to get into Heaven now.") and the sneaky tricks of "honest" children. Much of Cosby's current hit television series came from this monologue. *Color PG 104 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi stereo C: $59.95.*

GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROAD STREET (1984) Paul McCartney, the most commerically successful musician of all time, attempts to branch into the movie business. (Most critics said he did not succeed.) The plot concerns missing master tapes for a new album, which most believe were stolen by a McCartney employee with a shady background. *Color PG 109 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi stereo C: $29.95.*

EMBASSY

THE GRADUATE (1967) One of the few films that can actually be said to have epitomized a generation. Dustin Hoffman became a star as Benjamin Braddock, who spends his first post-college summer being seduced by Anne Bancroft while falling in love with her daughter, Katharine Ross. Mike Nichols won an Oscar for his direction, and the Paul Simon soundtrack, sung by Simon and Garfunkel, won three Grammy awards. And who could forget Bancroft's leg? *Color PG 105 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi stereo C: $59.95.*

ESQUIRE VIDEO

ULTIMATE FITNESS Billed as the first aerobic tape designed for men, this workout is nonetheless conducted by a woman, Deborah Crocker, director of fitness at Chicago's East Bank Club. A group of jocular types behind her, however, is provided to make men feel at home. Included in the workout are 10 minutes of warm-up, 30 minutes of aerobics (with a warning for beginners to quit after 12 and intermediate exercisers to give up after 20), 15 minutes of abdominal and arm exercises and a five-minute cool-down period, after which Crocker applauds the home viewer, saying "you've done a great job." *Color 60 minutes C: $29.95.*

MCA

UNDER THE VOLCANO (1984) Albert Finney's performance as an alcoholic ex-Consolate dominates this intriguing and troubling film. Finney was nominated for an Oscar for his performance, which focuses on the Consolate's relationship with his estranged wife (Jacqueline Bisset) and half-brother (Anthony Andrews) during the Cuernavaca, Mexico "Day of the Dead" festival in 1939. Veteran director John Huston, who made The Treasure of the Sierra Madre from a Malcolm Lowry novel, waited over 35 years to film this one. Guy Gallo wrote the screenplay. *Color R 112 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi mono C: $79.95.*

MGM/UA

THE POPE OF GREENWICH VILLAGE (1984) Mickey Rourke (Diner) Daryl Hannah (Splash) and Eric Roberts star in this tale of friendships, relationships and thievery in New York's Little Italy. Two small-time hustlers (Rourke and Roberts) look to make a big score, but the scheme backfires and they get caught in a struggle between the local mob chieftain (Burt Young) and corrupt cops. Kenneth McMillan and Geraldine Page (who was nominated for a best supporting actress Oscar) co-star in this critically acclaimed film. *Color C: $79.95.*

RCA/COLUMBIA

THE CAINE MUTINY (1954) Humphrey Bogart, in one of his last roles, plays paranoia to the hilt as Captain Caine. Van Johnson, the executive officer, takes over the ship during a typhoon, and a court martial results in which both men's careers are examined and questioned. Jose Ferrer and Fred MacMurray costar. *Color 125 minutes Beta hifi. C: $59.95.*

THE RAZOR'S EDGE (1984) Bill Murray gets serious as Larry Darrell, who returns from World War I and embarks on a journey to find himself in this adaptation of W. Somerset Maugham's novel. The screenplay was written by Murray and John Byrum, who directed. Catherine Hicks, Theresa Russell, Denholm Elliott and James Keach co-star. *Color PG-13 129 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi stereo C: $79.95.*

SHEENA (1984) Tanya Roberts, her skimpy loin cloth and a horse painted to look like a zebra star in this jungle epic concerning the invasion by an evil prince of the domain of Sheena, queen of the jungle. Sheena, having been orphaned and raised by a native tribe, also gets her first look at white men (particularly Ted Wass). *Color PG 117 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi C: $79.95.*

Study shows public is wary of $1,000 8mm camcorder

(Continued from page 31)

reported. "But the problem with this product is price. The largest percentage of nonowners declined to indicate an acceptable price for a video camera. Only about 10 percent cited a price of more than $400. This suggests that the camera will continue as a niche product."

"The camera-recorder (or camcorder) combination, however, has been attracting quite a bit of attention recently," Boggs added. "Priced right, the product could certainly be a blockbuster and eat into the camera market."

"But here again, the key factor is price. More than 86 percent of VCR owners replied that they would be interested in an eight-mm camcorder priced under $500. At this price, they would forget about the compatibility problem with existing equipment.

"VCR non-owners were even more price-sensitive," he continued, "with 96 percent of the respondents saying they would be interested in an eight-mm camcorder only if it were priced under $500. While we'll be seeing models priced under $1,000, the $500 price point won't reach the market for some time."

In terms of videotape, shipments to retailers of both blank and prerecorded units will continue to grow at a rapid pace. Total shipments are projected to reach over 211 million units in 1988, an annual increase of 19 percent, Boggs reported.

In blank tape, shipments are expected to jump to 120 million units this year. After 1984, however, the growth rate will ease up, with approximately 150 million units projected for 1988. A major factor in the slower growth pattern will be consumer re-use of blank tapes already purchased.

Tape sales rising

Boggs also noted that the market for prerecorded tape will continue to show healthy gains throughout the decade. Shipments to retailers will reach 60 million units in 1988—an annual increase of almost 40 percent.

"We expect sales of prerecorded tapes to double this year as studios expand their experiments with lower price points," he noted. "In 1984, only one-sixth of the retailers' prerecorded tape revenue was generated through sales. With an assumed continuation of lower prices, prerecorded tapes should be more than one-third of the total revenue by 1988."

When asked whey they purchase prerecorded programs, the majority of respondents in the survey cited a desire for a permanent copy and plans to view the tape a number of times. In general, consumers gave high praise to the tape quality of their prerecorded purchases. Over 58 percent evaluated the quality of their tapes as being good."

A number of respondents, however, were displeased with the picture quality of the programs they rented," Boggs pointed out. "Dealers should regularly review their tape retirement policies to make sure that the effective play life is not being exceeded. I would recommend printing an evaluation card to go with each rental. Also, try to get feedback from your customers."

"Specialty stores are in the best position to encourage regular customer visits," he added. "Almost two-thirds of those surveyed said they rented video software from these outlets. Mass merchants ranked low in this area."

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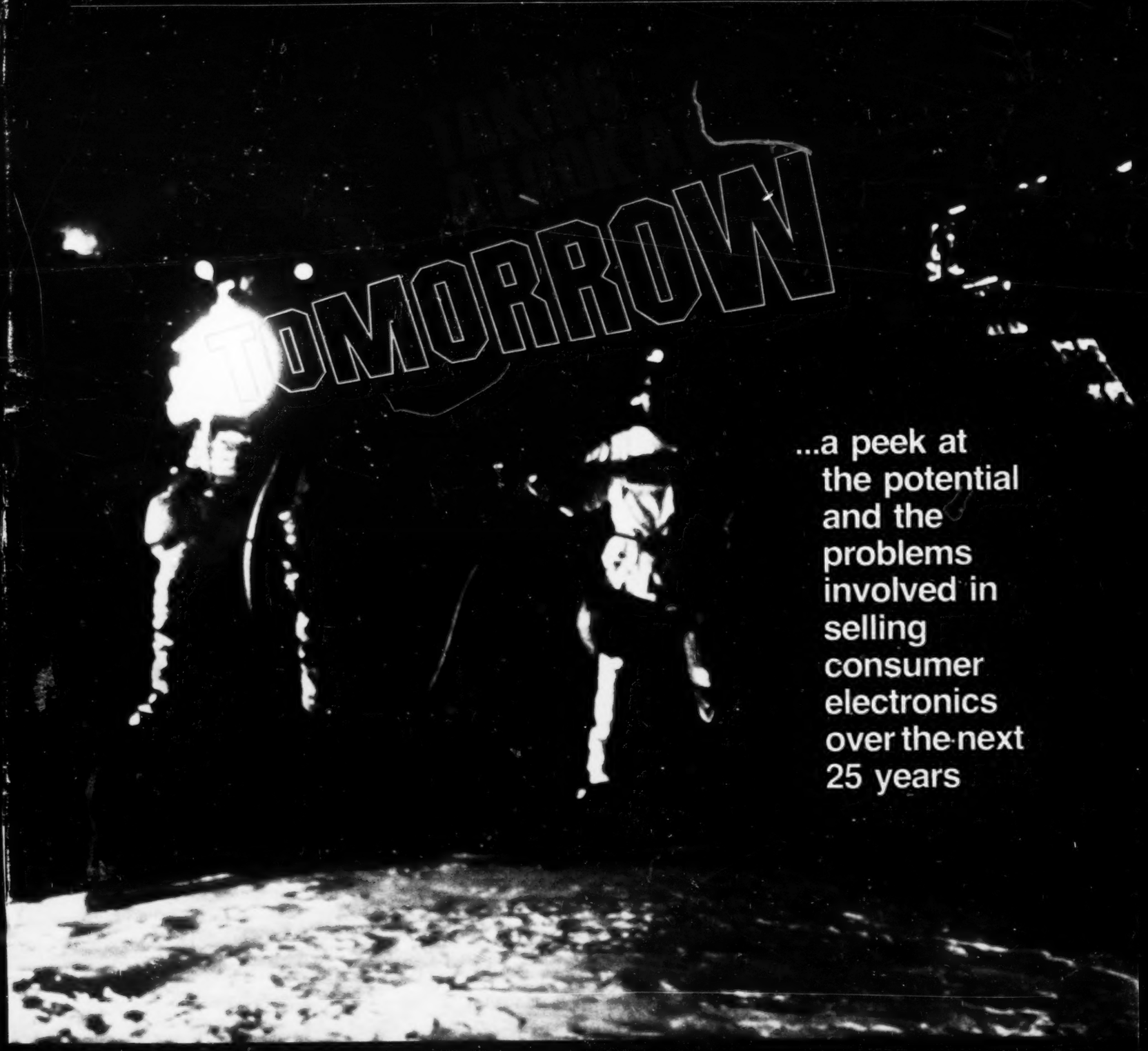

...a peek at the potential and the problems involved in selling consumer electronics over the next 25 years

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Retailer wages a one-man war against utilities selling appliances

Housewares vendors have cut the cords on a new generation of kitchen electrics

Video specialists: Dead or alive? ITA participants make predictions

Mass merchandisers of home computers pin their hopes on the new models

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May 1985
Our 78th Year
Vol. 10, No. 5

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Cover photo from the film 2010, courtesy of MGM/UA Entertainment Co.

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4. Gone With The Wind (MGM/UA)	8	2
5. Red Dawn (MGM/UA)	6	2
6. All of Me (Thorn/EMI-HBO) GP	2	3
7. Police Academy (Warner) GP	3	4
8. Woman in Red (Vestron) GP	5	3
9. Once Upon A Time in America (Warner)	P	2
10. Tightrope (Warner) GP	4	3
11. The Natural (RCA/Columbia) GP	7	5
12. Country (Touchstone)	—	1
13. Romancing the Stone (CBS/Fox)	12	8
14. The Razor's Edge (RCA/Columbia)	—	1
15. Crimes of Passion (New World)	—	1
16. The Evil That Men Do (RCA/Columbia)	10	3
17. The Little Drummer Girl (Warner)	—	1
18. The Adventures of Buckaroo Bonzai (Vestron)	17	2
19. Against All Odds (RCA/Columbia)	30	7
20. Cloak & Dagger (MCA) GP	16	4
21. Splash (Touchstone) GPI	14	8
22. The Empire Strikes Back (CBS/Fox)	19	5
23. Flashpoint (MCA)	27	2
24. The Last Starfighter (MCI) GPI	20	5
25. Give My Regards to Broad St. (CBS/Fox)	—	1
26. Dreamscape (Thorn EMI-HBO) GP	21	4
27. Sheena (RCA/Columbia)	—	1
28. Irreconcilable Differences (Vestron)	—	1
29. Ridinestone (CBS/Fox)	18	2
30. Cheech & Chong-Corsican Bros. (Lightning)	—	1

Top 10 in videocassette sales

1. Gone With The Wind (MGM/UA)	2	2
2. Star Trek III: The Search For Spock (Paramount)	1	2
3. Jane Fonda's Workout (Karl Video) GPI	3	34
4. Jane Fonda's Prime Time (Karl Video) GP	5	5
5. Lionel Richie: All Night Long (RCA/Columbia)	7	2
6. Purple Rain (Warner) GP	4	5
7. Tina Turner: Private Dancer (Sony)	—	1
8. Raiders of the Lost Ark (Paramount)	6	18
9. Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (Paramount)	8	14
10. Do It Debbie's Way (Video Associates) GP	—	1

Top 5 in laserdisc sales

1. The Empire Strikes Back (CBS/Fox)	1	5
2. Gone With The Wind (MGM/UA)	—	1
3. The Natural (RCA/Columbia) GP	—	1
4. Tightrope (Warner) GP	3	3
5. Police Academy (Warner) GP	4	4

Top 5 in alternative programs

1. Jane Fonda's Workout (Karl Video) GPI	1	7
2. Jane Fonda Prime Time (Karl Video) GP	2	5
3. Lionel Richie: All Night Long (RCA/Columbia)	5	2
4. Duran Duran: Sing Blue Silver (Thorn EMI-HBO)	4	2
5. Tina Turner: Private Dancer (Sony)	—	1

I —Golden Videocassettes award—has audited return of sales or rentals of $1 million unless company has a return policy. Then, the allowance must be deducted from the gross revenue. (ITA)
P—Title has gone platinum—has sold 100,000 on disc and/or cassette and has sales of at least $4 million. (RIAA/Video)
G—Title has gone gold—has sold 50,000 on disc and/or cassette and has sales of at least $2 million. (RIAA/Video)
(For non-theatrical products, the RIAA certifies a Gold award for 20,000 units or a value of $500,000 in suggested retail price. Platinum awards are given to tapes with 40,000 units or at least $1.5 million in suggested retail value.)

VIDEO/NEW RELEASES

BEST

VIDEO BINGO That's right, you don't have to go to church to play bingo anymore. This two-hour cassette comes with enough bingo cards and plastic markers for a number of people to gather around the VCR and listen for the numbers and letters (of course, the payoffs at church are better). Players are invited to make up their own patterns (diagonal, across, down, square, etc.) to keep the game fresh for repeated plays. *C: $34.95.*

CBS/FOX

TEACHERS (1984) The most popular teacher at John F. Kennedy High School is an escaped mental patient (Richard Mulligan). Another (JoBeth Williams) walks down the hallways in the nude every once in a while. A third ... well, you get the idea. In the style of Hospital, this film deals in outrageous terms with the trials and tribulations of high school teachers. Starring Nick Nolte, Judd Hirsch, Lee Grant and Allen Garfield. Directed by Arthur Hiller. *Color R 106 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi stereo C: $79.98.*

WINDY CITY (1984) Danny Morgan (John Shea) is at a crossroads in life, but he sees every road as a dead end. His best friend (Josh Mostel) is dying, his girlfriend (Kate Capshaw) is marrying another guy and his boyhood cronies, The Rogues, are scattered about Chicago, each involved in his own problems. This lyrical homage to friendship and romance depicts Danny's attempts to get his life back together, publish his first novel, win back his girl and give his friend a proper send-off. Written and directed by Armyan Bernstein. *Color R 103 minutes C: $79.98.*

EMBASSY

THE COTTON CLUB (1984) The big one. Francis Ford Coppola spent a reported $47 million plus for producer Robert Evans, and came up with this gangster musical that juggles plots of revenge, stardom, dancing, killing, racism and romance. Richard Gere stars as a cornet player who saves the life of Dutch Schultz (James Remar) and ends up as an escort for Schultz's mistress (Diane Lane). Meanwhile, Gregory Hines is making a name for himself as a dancer while alienating his brother (Maurice Hines) and placing his romance with Lonette McKee in jeopardy. *Color PG VHS hifi Beta hifi stereo C: $79.95.*

KEY VIDEO

THE BROTHER FROM ANOTHER PLANET (1984) John Sayles (Baby, It's You; Return of the Secaucus Seven) wrote and directed this off-beat tale of a black extra-terrestrial (Joe Morton) who flees slavery on another planet and winds up in Harlem, where he is befriended by the regulars at a local bar and pursued by two bounty hunters from space (one of whom is played by Sayles). *Color R 109 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi stereo C: $79.95.*

MCA

DUNE (1984) The expansive, expensive version of Frank Herbert's cult classic novel features Kyle MacLachlan as Paul Antreides, destined to rule a planet which produces a life-prolonging spice. Before he can ascend to the throne, however, he must deal with such obstacles as the rock star Sting, who wants to have a shot at ruling himself. *Color PG-13 137 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi stereo C: $79.95.*

MGM/UA

MISSING IN ACTION (1984) Martial arts star Chuck Norris is a former POW who returns to Vietnam to settle some old scores and help some MIA's back to the U.S. How he does that is the meat of the film, with enough firepower to satisfy any Clint Eastwood fan. This film (or rather, its profits) inspired the recent "prequel," "Part 2: The Beginning" *Color R 101 minutes C: $79.95.*

THOSE LIPS, THOSE EYES (1980) Recent Oscar nominee Thomas Hulce (Amadeus) is a starstruck kid working his first summer in a regional theatre. He's falling in love with a dancer (Glynnis O'Connor), running props, fighting with his father (Jerry Stiller) over his low grades in a pre-med make-up course, and all the while falling under the spell of the theatre and the seedy company's leading man (Frank Langella), who's trying to make it back to Broadway. *Color R 106 minutes C: $59.95.*

VESTRON

BETTE MIDLER-ART OR BUST (1984) Or both. The expanded version of a Cinemax special that aired last year shows Midler on stage, on film and in animation. The Divine Miss M also contributes archival footage of her last performance at the Continental Baths in New York and a clip from an Israel telethon in which Bette "drops her dress for Israel." You just can't keep a good girl down. *Color 82 minutes VHS hifi Beta hifi stereo C: $59.95.*